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SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ANAVATAN WITHDRAWS FROM ELECTION, HOPES TO  
CAPITALIZE ON ANTICIPATED STALEMATE OF JULY 22 AFTERMATH

REF: A. ANKARA 1477

[1](#)B. ANKARA 0979

Classified By: Consul General Deborah K. Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and  
(d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Motherland Party (ANAVATAN) Istanbul Branch  
Chairman Sinan Gedik confided his party withdrew on June 8  
from upcoming parliamentary elections because it anticipates  
the elections will result in a three-party parliament unable  
to elect a president and consequently forced to dissolve.  
ANAVATAN plans to capitalize on the subsequent round of  
elections expected to result from this stand off. Gedik  
blamed a failed merger attempt with the Democrat Party (DP)  
-- formerly the True Path Party (DYP) -- on procedural  
mismanagement, especially on the part of the DP, and espoused  
stronger Turkish ties with the United States. He claimed  
ANAVATAN made its decision to boycott the April 27  
presidential vote only after consulting with party  
organizations across Turkey and after FM Gul had been  
nominated as the sole candidate. End summary.

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Better luck next time?  
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[1](#)2. (C) Gedik -- who became branch chairman one month ago --  
confirmed in a June 7 meeting that ANAVATAN was trying to  
collaborate with DP in the aftermath of the failed  
DP-ANAVATAN merger. Those efforts seemed to end June 8, when  
the Supreme Election Board (SEB) ruled that individuals  
appearing on ANAVATAN's previously submitted list of  
candidates could not be re-submitted on other party lists  
(ref A). ANAVATAN then announced it would not participate in  
the upcoming parliamentary elections to avoid dividing  
center-right votes.

[1](#)3. (C) Gedik confided to us in a June 10 telecon that his  
party's decision to withdraw was more strategic than  
altruistic. ANAVATAN expects three parties will cross the 10  
percent election threshold in the July 22 elections, none  
with a majority of seats. The new parliament will be unable  
to elect a president, claims Gedik, forcing parliament to  
dissolve and new general elections to occur by the end of the  
year. ANAVATAN will concentrate on crossing the threshold in  
these later elections, Gedik said.

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Why the merger failed...  
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[1](#)4. (C) Joined by three fellow Istanbul-based ANAVATAN board

members and two parliamentary election candidates in a newly-minted branch headquarters building on June 7, Gedik proudly expounded the historical and current significance of ANAVATAN for Turkey. He explained that while Ataturk was the father of the Republic, it was ANAVATAN founder and former Prime Minister Turgut Ozal who emancipated Turks and helped them to better understand and integrate with the world. He added that Ozal established the party's fundamental principle of freedom, in particular the freedoms of faith and expression. In a veiled reference to his party's failed merger with DP, Gedik argued ANAVATAN's continued existence is critical because its members are the only ones who espouse and institutionalize these values.

15. (C) Addressing the failed DP merger, Gedik asserted ANAVATAN leader Erkan Mumcu made "all efforts and sacrifice" for cooperation between the two parties; that the process had not been managed well -- especially by the DP; and that there would be no negative affect on ANAVATAN's grass roots organization. ANAVATAN's members had been against the merger because they did not want to subordinate the party to DP leader Mehmet Agar. "Leadership is very important in Turkey," explained Gedik, "Mumcu has proven to be a leader...and will become a great leader for the country, like Ozal."

16. (C) Gedik also pointed out that of all the parties currently represented in parliament, ANAVATAN was the only one to be fully self-financed. He noted that the building we were meeting in, for example, was completely owned and financed by the party. Because ANAVATAN did not pass the threshold during the last elections, Gedik added, it was not eligible for government funding. He claimed that the Ozal administration had instituted a more liberal policy of

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granting treasury funds to parties that failed to meet the threshold but met other conditions; AKP and CHP however, adopted the stricter policy in April 2005, lamented Gedik.

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Relations with the United States  
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17. (C) Stressing the importance of strong U.S.-Turkish relations, Gedik argued that beginning with the Truman Doctrine and with only a few exceptions, the relationship had been almost perfect until the March 1, 2003 resolution regarding Iraq. He explained that ANAVATAN expected the resolution would pass and understood that its failure to do so was a "blow" to relations. Gedik argued that many people supported the resolution because they valued Turkey's friendship with the United States and wanted an opportunity to take part in Iraq's reconstruction. He concluded that ANAVATAN believes relations between the United States and Turkey still have a future and should be strengthened. At the same time Gedik stressed that the potential for an independent Kurdish state to emerge out of northern Iraq is very sensitive to Turks, feeds anti-Americanism and, as a result, must be prevented.

18. (C) Gedik asserted the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) was partly responsible for anti-Americanism in Turkey. Faulting AKP for its lack of transparency, he suggested AKP leaders say different things to different audiences. This disingenuous proclivity was also evident in domestic affairs, alleged Gedik. He claimed, for example, that AKP had sought and obtained ANAVATAN's support for a constitutional amendment -- calling for the popular election of the president to no more than two five year terms -- by promising that it would not seek to push the amendment through before the July 22 parliamentary election. Gedik accused AKP of breaking this promise as soon as it secured ANAVATAN's votes.

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## Presidential elections

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¶9. (C) Regarding ANAVATAN's pivotal decision to boycott the first round of presidential voting on April 27 (ref B), Gedik stressed that party leadership consulted with constituent organizations across the country after FM Gul was nominated as AKP's candidate. He admitted that while he was surprised by the Constitutional Court's May 1 "quorum" ruling, it was a decision that "must be obeyed and not questioned." He blamed AKP for putting party interests ahead of the country's and accused PM Erdogan of contributing to tensions by not announcing the party's candidate until the last minute.

¶10. (C) CHP, by promoting a secularist versus anti-secularist debate, was also responsible for increasing tensions, Gedik said. "These tensions need to be discarded," he added, stressing that this is where Mumcu's greatness is most evident. Mumcu, he explained, reached out to both ends of the political spectrum by boycotting the presidential election on the one hand and supporting the "five plus five" constitutional amendment proposal on the other.

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Comment  
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¶11. (C) Comment: ANAVATAN's strategy to focus on an anticipated second general election later this year may not be wishful thinking, given the party's single-digit poll results. Despite Gedik's enthusiastic praise for his party and Mumcu, the DP-ANAVATAN merger fiasco has greatly diminished Mumcu's leadership image and ANAVATAN's future prospects. End comment.

JONES